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**History and Description:
Los Angeles City Government
(1781-1998)**

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HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION: LOS ANGELES CITY GOVERNMENT (1781-1998)

(Revised June 1998)

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EVOLUTION OF LOS ANGELES CITY GOVERNMENT (1781-1998)

From Pueblo to Ciudad

Spanish rule. Los Angeles is one of the youngest major cities in the world. In 1769, fearing Russian expeditions into New Spain, José de Gálvez, Spanish visitor-general of New Spain organized an expedition into Alta (upper) California to reinforce Spanish possession. He appointed Captain Gaspar de Portolá, the governor of the California peninsula, as military and expedition leader and Father Junípero Serra, who oversaw the Franciscan missions of California, as mission leader. Future governor Pedro Fages was one of Portolá's junior officers. The expedition was comprised of four groups (two ships and two overland parties). The ships turned back at San Diego due to rampant scurvy among crew and colonists. The first overland party arrived in San Diego on May 13th. On May 14th Portolá left Vellicatá, arriving in San Diego on June 30th. Father Serra remained at San Diego to begin establishing a chain of Alta California missions. Portolá proceeded north, leading the first Spanish land exploration of the Pacific coast between San Diego and San Francisco. On July 28th a strong earthquake and after shocks were felt while the men encamped on the banks of the Santa Ana River, east of Anaheim. On August 1st they enjoyed a day of rest and exploration and celebrated the jubilee of Nuestra Señora Reina de Los Angeles de Porciúncula (Our Lady Queen of the Angels of Porciúncula).¹ While chaplain and diarist Friar Juan Crespi was serving communion another violent quake made the land tremble. Crespi speculated incorrectly that nearby mountains contained volcanoes which were causing the earthquakes. On August 2nd they crossed the valley to an extensive dry river bed (north of the Arroyo Seco) which they named Rio de Porciúncula. The next day they forded the river and continued through the valley south of the Santa Monica Mountains. Crespi described the area, indicating its suitability for establishing a future colony: a large vineyard of "wild grapes and an infinity of rose bushes in full bloom. All the soil is black and loamy, and is capable of producing every kind of grain and fruit which may be planted." Three hours later they were at a *cienega* (a marsh) in which there was a large grove of alders and the stream banks were covered with "fragrant herbs and watercress." Explorers found pitch "boiling and bubbling" from nearby marshes (the La Brea tar pits in the Wilshire area). Crespi indicated the pitch would be suitable for caulking ships.

In 1776, the year colonies on the east coast of North America declared their independence from England, Felipe de Neve, governor of California (1774-82) visited the area on his way to establish a capital in Monterey for Alta California. Subsequently he proposed to the King of Spain that settler *pueblos* (towns) be established along the Rio de Porciúncula and at what is now San José to provide provisions for Spanish troops traveling *el camino real* (the Royal Road) between the missions of San Diego and San Francisco. The southern pueblo would provide a way station between the future Santa Barbara mission and San Diego mission. San José was established in 1777. It was the first official California town.

In 1781 Neve led 46 colonists from Sonora to establish a farming colony on the banks of Rio de Porciúncula (later renamed the Los Angeles River). Two recruits separated from the party in route. In August the colonists and their military escort arrived at the San Gabriel mission where the group briefly was quarantined due to small pox having been contracted by some of the children. On August 26th Neve issued settlement instructions. On September 4th he led the remaining colonists to the site of the future pueblo, founding *el Pueblo de la Reina de los Angeles* (the Town of the Queen of the Angels). The colony was comprised of 12 men, some with families; a total of 44 people. Of the 22 adults, two were Spanish, one mestizo, two black, eight mulatto and nine Mexican Indian. All were poor. They were selected on the basis of their availability and special skills, such as blacksmithing and farming.

¹ Porciúncula is a small Italian town where the Church of Our Lady of the Angeles is located. Saint Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order, prayed there. Source: Philip L. Fradkin, *THE SEVEN STATES OF CALIFORNIA*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. "Porciúncula" means "small portion."

In accordance with Neve's "Reglamento é Instruccion" (Regulation and Instructions) for colonization of the territory of California, as approved by King Carlos III of Spain in 1781, the pueblo was granted four square leagues of land (approximately 28 square miles) and water rights to all of the upper Rio de Porciúncula. The city to this day retains the 1781 rights to 328,500 acres of surface and ground water within and outside the city limits, including the San Fernando Valley basin (122,800 acres) and surrounding hills and mountains (205,700 acres). It is bounded by the Santa Susana Mountains, San Gabriel Mountains, San Rafael Hills, Simi Hills and Santa Monica Mountains.² The Reglamento specified each settler (i.e., each adult male) was to be provided a financial advance in the form of livestock, seed and implements and an annual allotment (issued each of three years) of clothing and essential goods. Tithing and taxation were waived for five years, during which time the settlers were to pay back, in the form of produce, the initial financial advance. In return they were to construct dams, irrigation canals, roads, streets, a church and other public buildings; plant and tend their own and public farm lands; sell their surplus produce to the *presidios* (military settlements) and be prepared to serve in the military in an emergency. To prevent monopolization of pueblo wealth, no villager could own more than 50 animals of any particular type, e.g., cows, horses or pigs.

The colony was situated on the west side of the river, within a site estimated to have been roughly six-square miles in area. Hunter-gatherer Indians inhabited the region, including those in a nearby village. Within a few months the colony had built simple huts and its first *zanja* (water ditch) to carry water from the river for domestic and farming needs. By 1784 small permanent homes, a chapel and a few public buildings had been erected of adobe and an adobe church was under construction.

Five years after the pueblo was founded (1786) Governor Pedro Fages ordered the army to prepare a land survey. Based on the survey, he formally issued, or reissued, the pueblo its land and water rights. In addition, he allocated each of the remaining nine adult male inhabitants, including one immigrant from another settlement, a house lot and four fields within the pueblo boundaries, and a branding iron for identification of each man's livestock. Spain retained ownership of the land. Around 1784 Spain began issuing provisional land grants outside the pueblo for purposes of cattle raising. Generally the ranchers lived in the pueblo. The first allocations were to a retired San Diego corporal, José Verdugo (Rancho San Rafael, aka La Zanja, which today is Glendale and part of Burbank), Juan José Dominguez (San Pedro aka Dominguez Rancho) and Manuel Nieto (Rancho Nieto, encompassing what today includes Whittier and part of Long Beach). Nieto eventually boasted the largest stock holding in the district, an estimated 1,100 head of cattle, followed by Dominguez with an estimated 1,000 head.

The residents were allowed no voice in their own governance. Neve appointed a semi-military *comisionado* (commissioner) to administer the pueblo. By 1786 the male adults were allowed to elect an *ayuntamiento* (town council) consisting of an *alcalde* (mayor) and two *regidores* (city councilmen) which was subject to the authority of the *comisionado*. José Venegas, a thirty-three year old Indian, was elected *alcalde*. Most matters of consequence were resolved by direct vote or by directives from representatives of Spain. By 1790 the colony had grown to 139 people and 29 homes. It was very productive, growing 4,500 bushels of grain, more than any other Alta California mission or pueblo, except the San Gabriel mission, and raising 2,980 large stock and 438 small stock.

Mexican rule/civil authority expanded. By the early 1800s a *síndico* position had been established to advise the town council on legal matters, manage the treasury, including public lands, and make collections, as directed by the council. In 1821, when Mexico won its independence from Spain, Alta

² Mann, John F. and Blevins, Melvin L. "Management of San Fernando Valley Water Rights and Groundwater Contamination," HazMat West 1990 Conference, Long Beach, November 6-8, 1990. Acreage figures provided by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

California became a territory of Mexico. Mexican territorial law specified local governmental authority and organization. It provided for a town council consisting of a first *alcalde* (mayor, council president), second *alcalde* (acting mayor in the mayor's absence), two *regidores*, a *síndico*, a secretary and a *comisionado*. The latter three were appointed by the first *alcalde*. The *regidores* carried out assignments delegated to them by the first *alcalde*. The *síndico* was corporate (*pueblo*) legal advocate and treasurer. The *comisionado* was town administrator. Mexican law specified that elections were to be held in December, officers were to assume office on January 1st and council meetings were to be held each week, on a regular day, time and location agreed upon by the council. The council officially had greater authority but, when the governor appointed the former military *comisionado* as civil *comisionado*, the civil and military authorities were again merged.

On June 12, 1830 the Congress of Mexico promulgated new territorial law for governance of *pueblos* and *ciudades* (cities). It specified elective and appointive offices and outlined procedures for conduct of council meetings, elections and general business. The 1830 law provided for the appointment, by the first *alcalde*, of standing committees to address supply of water and food, city finances, etc. and occasional committees to consider matters of gravity and fairness that could not be decided at a council meeting. For purposes of elections and judicial matters, Los Angeles was divided into four districts (the *ranchos* of Santa Gertrudis, San Rafael, Santa Ana and San Pedro). The registered voters of each were to elect a commissioner to administer the general election in their district. The *alcaldes* were elected at-large; the four *regidores* from each district. Brothers could not serve at the same time. The first *alcalde* was to appoint a *síndico* and four justices of the *ranchos*. The justices were to maintain peace and order. Apparently Los Angeles did not abide by the new law until 1833.

Revolution in Alta California began in 1829 with a brief rebellion which was quickly put down. In February 1831 Governor Manuel Victoria refused to convene the legislature. He began arresting Los Angeles leaders or banishing them to Mexico. Some escaped to San Diego where they organized a revolt, retaking Los Angeles on December 4th. They then regrouped to engage Victoria, who was marching with his forces from the capital at Monterey. The rebels were defeated near the *pueblo* by Victoria. The wounded Victoria withdrew to the San Gabriel mission where, on December 9th he ordered the legislature to convene in Los Angeles on January 1st. He then surrendered his office to ex-governor and rebel leader General José María Echeandía and returned to Mexico. On January 1st the legislature elected prominent Los Angeles resident and land owner Pio Pico governor. Pico was born in the San Gabriel Mission of Afro-mestizo heritage. Pico took office on January 27th. Although he had joined the rebellion after his brother Andrés was imprisoned, the townspeople and Echeandía refused to recognize his election, causing him to resign after 21 days in office.

Council committees established. The following January (1833) Governor Agustín V. Zamorano declared the December Los Angeles elections invalid and demanded that they be held in accordance with the 1830 law. Elections took place on January 4th. First *Alcalde* José A. Camillo appointed new officers and the first council standing committees: police, good order and *zanja*. The Alta California revolt still was underway, with Los Angeles serving as the capital of Echeandía's government of the south, while the town council adhered to the dictates of Zamorano's government of the north in Monterey. To terminate the dispute, Mexico appointed José Figueroa governor. He arrived in Alta California in mid-January. Both Zamorano and Echeandía accepted his appointment. To restore order, Figueroa placed local governments under the command of semi-military *jefe políticos* (chief political authorities).

Pueblo becomes a city. On May 23, 1835 Mexico elevated Los Angeles to the status of a *ciudad* (city), the only *pueblo* to gain that status during the Mexican era. In July it was designated the capital of Alta California. On October 23rd the Congress of Mexico adopted a new constitution and on October 27th the governor issued new territorial law for local government, consistent with the new constitution. Each territory was to be governed by a *jefe político* (governor) and divided into regions governed by semi-military *jefe políticos* (commanders). Los Angeles was designated the capital of the territory of Alta California and of the Los Angeles region that extended from approximately Los Angeles to San Juan Capistrano. The new

law specified city officers, their duties, election procedures and council meeting protocol. It enlarged the Los Angeles council to nine members: two alcaldes, six regidores (elected from each of six districts) and a sindico. The regional jefe politico was designated an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the city council with the right to take upon himself any of the duties of the city officials. The Los Angeles districts were modified. Ranchos San Rafael, Santa Gertrudis and San Pedro comprised individual districts. Rancho Santa Ana was divided into three districts (lower Santa Ana, Santa Ana, Cajon de Santa Ana). The number of rancho justices appointed by the first alcalde was increased accordingly.

In 1836, in addition to the existing standing committees (police, good government and zanjias), First Alcalde Manuel Requena appointed a vacant lands committee to make recommendations to the council concerning requests for land allocation and a temporary committee to review a dispute involving city finances. All committees had two members, either two councilmen or a councilman and lay person. The police committee handled judicial matters, including settlement of land and other disputes that could not be resolved by the justices of the ranchos and petitions for expansion of land holdings. The good government committee prepared ordinances and the committee on zanjias oversaw the work of the *zanjero* (zanja overseer) who was appointed by the first alcalde. The *zanjero* was paid by property owners to repair and maintain the zanjias that ran through their lands. The first official census was conducted in 1836. It recorded 2,228 people, including 553 "domesticated" (ranch worker) Indians in the city, which was approximately 100 square miles in area, including surrounding Spanish and Mexican land grant ranchos and the San Gabriel mission.

Juan Alvarado's revolution. In the meantime, designation of Los Angeles as capital had triggered a revolt in Monterey, forcing a succession of short term governors to remain in Monterey during 1835 and most of 1836. On November 3, 1836 Governor Nicolas Gutierrez moved the capital to Los Angeles and assumed command of the region. Fifteen days later he was kidnapped and imprisoned by a force led by Juan Bautista Alvarado, a Monterey customs house accountant. The government in exile fled to Santa Barbara. On November 26th Alvarado declared himself governor of the "free and sovereign state of California." South California (Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Diego) remained loyal to Mexico. In January 1837, as Alvarado's forces advanced toward Los Angeles and due to the lack of a regional governor, the city council declared itself the regional government, removed the regional treasury from the San Fernando Mission and ordered sympathizers of Alvarado to leave the city. A few days later a militia of Los Angeles and San Diego recruits was defeated by Alvarado at San Buenaventura (now Ventura), north of Los Angeles. On January 30th Alvarado and the council concluded a treaty and Alvarado placed the ciudad under military occupation pending the delivery to him of the regional treasury, some of which had been given to San Diego for the militia. During this chaotic period the council wrestled with an array of civil issues, including maintaining local order, settlement of property disputes, keeping the zanjias free of garbage and sewage, raising money for the treasury (tariffs and fines), and attempting to stop theft and smuggling of money, hides and goods from San Pedro harbor warehouses and ships to a smugglers' base on Santa Catalina Island.

In April 1837 Alvarado declared that California, while a territory of Mexico, was free to govern itself. In May Mexico reestablished the regional government in Los Angeles. In August Mexico recognized Alvarado as governor of Alta California. Alvarado ordered civil governments to comply with his constitution of 1836 and instituted measures to implement the Mexican policy of limiting activities of or arresting foreigners so as to stem the increasing tide of immigration from the United States. In 1838 First Alcalde Luis Arena assigned the committee on vacant lands the tasks of making determinations concerning requests for transfer of lands abandoned during the war and handling petitions for expansion of land holdings. In addition to the other standing committees, he appointed a finance committee to administer and audit accounts.

In 1838 President Antonio López de Santa Ana, in an effort to consolidate his authority following his imprisonment by the new Republic of Texas, centralized the Mexican government. Lands under the authority of Mexico were divided into departments and the departments into territories. Each territory was to be administered by a governor appointed by the departmental governor. The department of Alta California was divided into North (Monterey Territory) and South (San Diego Territory) California, with Los Angeles designated as the seat of the government of the south. The South Territory stretched from

approximately Santa Barbara into the northern part of Baja California. Monterey was designated capital of the department and seat of the government of the north. Alvarado was appointed departmental governor. In June new city elections were held. In July the council issued articles setting forth city rules and regulations, pursuant to Mexican law.

Suspension of civil authority. In 1839 President Santa Ana again reorganized his government. The departments were divided into prefectures, the prefectures into municipal districts. The department of Alta California was divided into north and south prefectures, with Alvarado as governor. Los Angeles was designated headquarters of the south prefecture (District of San Diego). Semi-military prefects were appointed by governors as administrators. The Los Angeles prefect was made president of the councils and the first alcalde post was abolished.

In April and May 1839, Los Angeles Prefect José Castro issued a series of directives granting himself sole authority over the city's administrative, legislative and judicial affairs. In protest the city council refused to attend the June 1st meeting called by Castro, prompting him to declare the council abolished. Five days later he mysteriously left the city on an expedition and was replaced by a temporary prefect who restored authority to the city council. Self-rule was short lived. On November 21, 1839 the temporary prefect announced that the governor had dissolved the city council and appointed him town justice and administrator.

On January 1, 1840 local government was abolished in Alta California. In 1837 the Congress of Mexico had adopted a law prohibiting localities with populations of less than 4,000 from self government. A survey of Alta California found that no locality qualified to govern itself. All localities were to be administered by a departmental assembly. Administrative authority was delegated to district prefects. The prefects were authorized to appoint justices of the peace to maintain peace and order and carry out their directives. From 1840 until 1844 no city elections were held and no formal government existed in Los Angeles. Each December the prefect appointed two Los Angeles justices who assumed office in January. The prefects, with the assistance of the justices, allocated lands; adjudicated land disputes; investigated assaults, thefts of cattle and smuggling; authorized marriages and divorces; and determined the disposition of property and children of deceased residents.

In 1842, war between Mexico and the United States seemed imminent. To prevent another catastrophe, like the revolt of Texas, President Santa Ana sent General Emanuel Micheltorena to Alta California. Micheltorena arrived with an army recruited from Mexican prisons. They marched to Los Angeles and then headed north. In October, before they reached the capital, Monterey was captured by overeager U.S. naval commodore Thomas Ap Catesby Jones who thought the war had begun. Micheltorena returned to Los Angeles where, in December, he replaced Alvarado as governor of Alta California and received Jones' contrite apology. Micheltorena remained in Los Angeles for eight months, during which time his impoverished, poorly controlled soldiers and their families created a variety of police problems for the city.

Civil authority restored. In January 1844 civil government was restored by Mexico. Manuel Requena was appointed first alcalde and authorized to convene a council and make appointments. He appointed a síndico, clerk, judges of the plains (aka justices of the ranchos), standing committees and other officers, including "guardians of the land." Guardians, supervised by a councilman, assisted justices of the plains in maintaining law and order. Requena asked each of the two-member standing committees (police, water and vacant lands) to draft laws pertaining to its area of responsibility. The first committee to submit proposed laws was the police committee whose laws were adopted, including requirements for worker permits, documentation of sale of beef hides, control of wandering animals, riding horses at a safe speed through town, street sweeping and a saloon curfew; restrictions on bearing arms, gambling and on-street parking of wagons; and authority for justices to appoint guardians to help them maintain order. In July, when a small pox epidemic was reported in Monterey, Requena appointed the city's first recorded board of health (the city attorney, town doctor and the local military commander). The number of guardians was increased to assure compliance with the new health regulations, especially to make sure that people did

not wash their clothes or dump garbage in the zanjias which supplied the city with water. A census was conducted in 1844. It recorded 1,253 residents and guests (generally not including Indians) within the city in an approximately 100-square mile area.

In November 1844, ex-governor Alvarado and former prefect José Castro mounted another rebellion. On February 20, 1845 their forces defeated Governor Micheltorena's forces at Cahuenga Pass (including a contingent of American settlers from the Sacramento area led by Captain John Sutter). As senior member of the departmental assembly, Pío Pico became governor. He made the capital Los Angeles, retaining departmental archives in Monterey.

War/U.S. military occupation. During the summer of 1845 revolution broke out in Mexico and on April 24, 1846 war was declared between Mexico and the United States. Lieutenant Colonel John C. Frémont, on the third of his famous explorations of the west, was the only U.S. army officer in California when the war began. He declared himself military commander of the U.S. forces in California and agreed to take command of the 'Bear Flag' revolt begun by American settlers to defend their lands and defeat the Mexican army in North California. Their grizzly bear battle flag became the inspiration for the California state bear flag design. In the meantime, U.S. naval forces under the command of Commodore John Drake Sloat captured Monterey. Sloat placed Commander Robert F. Stockton in command of the U.S. forces, including the bear flaggers. They sailed to San Pedro and San Diego in July. Stockton's men marched inland to Los Angeles, which they took with little opposition on August 13, 1846, declaring California a possession of the United States. They were joined by Frémont's forces which had marched to Los Angeles from San Diego. Stockton appointed Frémont governor of the territory. Both returned to northern California, leaving a small occupation contingent in Los Angeles. In late September, learning that the city had been retaken, Stockton ordered Frémont to Los Angeles and returned to San Pedro with naval forces. Fearing superior insurgent forces and in need of supplies, he sailed with part of his forces to San Diego, returning overland to Los Angeles. Frémont arrived at the San Fernando Mission about the time that Stockton and General Stephen W. Kearney entered Los Angeles in January. Kearney, fresh from battle field victories in Mexico, had been on his way with soldiers to assist the Americans in California when they were engaged and defeated by General Andrés Pico near San Diego. Fearing that Kearney might seek retribution, Pico arranged a rendezvous with Frémont which resulted in negotiations that led to lenient terms of surrender. On January 13, 1847 Pico and Frémont signed the articles of capitulation at the Cahuenga Ranch (at the foot of what is now Universal City). For California, the Cahuenga Capitulation ended the hostilities between California and Mexico. California remained a part of Mexico until ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) which ended the war. Until the treaty was final, Los Angeles received orders from both Mexican and U.S. authorities, viewing the U.S. occupation as temporary.

Considering himself the official representative of the United States, Frémont assumed the post of commander-in-chief of California. Subsequently he was appointed governor by Stockton. Frémont established the capital in Los Angeles, outfitting an army and building fortifications, until he was summoned to Monterey (March 1847) by Kearney. Kearney, who had received official notice from President James Polk of his appointment as territorial governor, arrested Frémont for insubordination and overreaching his authority. He took Frémont under guard to Fort Levinworth, Kansas. Frémont was court martialed in Washington, D.C. in January 1848. Polk, who believed Frémont had been made a scapegoat by Kearney and Stockton, rescinded Frémont's dismissal from the army. Frémont resigned anyway and organized a private expedition to search for a southern route to California.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed by Mexico and the United States on February 2, 1848. Congressional ratifications were exchanged on May 30th and the proclamation was formally published by the United States on July 4th. Under the treaty the United States acquired an approximately 500,000 square mile area (what is now California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona and New Mexico, parts of Colorado and Wyoming) for \$15 million.

The Los Angeles military prefect, Colonel P. St. George allowed the five Californios (California born Mexicans) to continue serving on the city council. Conflicts arose when town leaders demanded that the military punish soldiers who had desecrated religious properties and assaulted and murdered citizens during the war and under the occupation. To bring order to the city, St. George was transferred and martial law was imposed under the U.S. military command in Santa Barbara. To the chagrin of the city council, the military refused to become involved in local matters, such as requests that the army destroy packs of stray dogs and help resettle the Christianized Indian laborers. The laborers' village at the edge of the city attracted prostitutes, gamblers, soldiers, townspeople and other Indians. On Saturday nights, after workers were paid, drunken revelries disturbed the general peace. First Alcalde José Salazar, insulted by military prefect Colonel Jonathan Stevenson's refusal to assign U.S. soldiers to act as jailers for miscreants, resigned in protest August 1847. Stevenson, at the behest of military governor Richard B. Mason, who wanted an American appointed mayor, appointed Stephen C. Foster first alcalde. This angered the citizenry. All members of the council resigned except the síndico, Abel Stearns. Citizens were so unhappy with Stevenson that, after registering to vote in December 1847, no citizen agreed to run for office under rules imposed by Foster, i.e., in accordance with U.S. law. Mason reprimanded Stevenson for failing to establish amicable relations between the civil and military authorities and instructed him to allow an election in accordance with Mexican law. The election took place May 1848, the month the military occupation of the city officially ended. Voters elected an all Californio town council except for Juan (John) Temple, who was elected síndico.

A California City

Preparation for statehood. During the Mexican era pueblo ownership was conveyed to the city but the city was prohibited from deeding title to its land and from taxing or improving lands allocated to individuals. Unused or misused lands were reclaimed by the city. City funds were raised primarily through tariffs on goods (salt, liquor, hides), license and permit fees (saloons, dances, liquor sale) and fines. In 1849 Los Angeles was in debt. To create a city treasury the council decided to divide vacant lands and sell the lots. It asked Governor Mason to select an army surveyor. Army lieutenant Edward O.C. Ord was hired in July 1849, completing the survey in August, with the help of William R. Hutton.

In October the council acknowledged the authority of the U.S. government, accepting General Bennett Riley as governor. In December it complied with Riley's request and elected an interim council in accordance with U.S. law. The council consisted of seven elected officials: two judges, four councilmen and an attorney. The council selected a president from its membership. The president appointed committees and other officials, similar to those existing previously. Also in December, it began selling vacant lots.

Statehood/cityhood (1850). In June Governor Riley set August 1, 1849 as election day for state constitutional convention delegates (four from Los Angeles). In September and October delegates worked for six weeks in Monterey to frame a constitution. On November 13th voters ratified the constitution and elected two Congressmen and two U.S. Senators (William Gwin and Frémont). When Congress refused to seat the four, they remained in Washington lobbying for statehood. Before Congress could admit California to the Union, it had to decide a formula for admission that would satisfy abolitionists and slaveholders. On September 9, 1850 California became the 31st state of the Union, entering as a free (non-slave) state under the Compromise of 1850.

Californians could not wait for official statehood. Provisions of the new constitution quickly were implemented, including formation of counties and cities. The state legislature created 27 counties, including Los Angeles county, and adopted "An Act on Provide For The Incorporation of Cities." The act allowed cities of more than four square miles in area and with a population of 2,000 or less to vote to incorporate under a general law charter. It specified the form of government and requirements (general law) for becoming and operating as a city, providing the first clear separation between the executive, legislative and judicial functions. A mayor could not be a member of a council and neither the mayor nor council president were given judicial authority. For voting purposes each county was divided into precincts. The county

election and city incorporation elections were held on the first Monday of April, 1850. General law charter cities were required to elect a mayor, recorder, between seven and twenty councilmen (elected from wards), a city marshall, city attorney, assessor, treasurer and other officials, all limited to one-year terms. The council was to meet weekly. It had budgetary and appointing powers and could override a mayoral budget veto by a two-thirds vote. Provisions of municipal authority were to be enacted by special state legislation. Only free, white males (including Hispanics), 21 years of age or older, who had lived in a city or county for 30 days or more could vote.

On April 1, 1850 Los Angeles became one of only four cities (San Santa Barbara, Sonoma and Stockton) that chose to incorporate as general law charter cities under the 1849 law. Other cities chose to be governed by special acts of the legislature. Los Angeles voters selected a seven-man council. It's first action was to pass a resolution declining the salaries authorized under state law, possibly resulting in the resignation of all but two members by the end of the year. It appointed a committee to draft a charter. On April 4, 1850 the state legislature by special acts incorporated the four cities and authorized them to adopt municipal charters. Pending adoption of a charter, Governor Riley retained authority over city affairs. Los Angeles voters approved a charter and municipal code on July 1, 1850, establishing a set of laws that generally copied those it had adopted during the latter part of the Mexican era. The charter and laws were approved by the state.

City boundary issue. After statehood in September 1850, California was required to comply with the U.S Constitution and laws of the United States. Congress recognized California's 1849 government and seated its elected congressional representatives. The federal land commission required that U.S. cities be four square leagues (about 28 square miles) in area. To determine precise corporate (town, city) and private property boundaries and ownerships in California, Congress, enacted land claims settlement laws. The laws required corporations and individuals to prove that the lands they claimed had been granted by either Spanish or Mexican land grants existing prior to July 7, 1846. A land claims settlement commission was appointed by the President to settle corporate claims. Proof of a claim was prima facie evidence of a grant. Only San José, Los Angeles, Sonoma and the four presidio cities (San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara and San Diego) qualified and applied for corporate (city boundary) patents. Los Angeles interpreted the city boundary law to mean "four leagues square" and claimed the 112 square miles it had governed during the Mexican period. Its claim was rejected in 1856 and the city was reduced to 28 square miles, the approximate acreage of the 1781 Spanish land grant.

To comply with the decision, the council in 1856 hired Major Henry Hancock to establish and square the city's boundaries. He completed his survey in 1858. In the meantime, the city appealed the 1856 ruling. It and the federal commission agreed to accept a district court ruling as final. The court ruled in favor of the commission. The 28-square mile boundary reduced the city's population to 1,610 people or less, below the minimum 2,000 residents necessary to qualify as a U.S. city. However, the census count included domestic Indians, who lived on ranches but not several hundred Indians who lived outside the ranches. In spite of the under count, Los Angeles was allowed to retain its city status. The city was authorized by the state to expand its boundaries 1,500 yards in any or all directions. In 1859 it chose to expand 400 yards to the south, its first annexation. In 1866 the federal government accepted the Hancock survey and President Andrew Johnson signed the city's corporate patent. Due to a technicality it was declared invalid. A new patent was signed in 1875.

City government. Between 1850 and 1868 the council president appointed two-member committees, comprised of a councilman as chair and either a citizen or another councilman. They investigated and made recommendations concerning vacant lands, streets, finances, police, jail location and construction, fire protection, water provision and cleanliness, and ordinances. The vacant lands, street and police committees were assigned the same duties they held in 1847. They were the most active committees due to the increase in land disputes, problems with street alignments and inadequate streets, water shortages, water quality and disorderly conduct.

In 1870 the charter was changed to establish three wards from which 10 councilmen were elected; three from Ward 1 and 2 and four from Ward 3. A police commission was created to administer the police force and recommend hiring and discipline of police personnel and punishment of citizens for violations of the law.

In 1878 a special act of the state legislature modified general rules applying to Los Angeles. It increased terms of elected officials to two years and provided a longer list of elected officials, including a mayor (also an ex-officio judge), 15 city councilmen (three councilmen from each of five wards) with staggered terms, an attorney (also served as prosecutor), assessor, tax collector, treasurer and other officers. The council had budgetary and appointing authority and created other offices, as necessary, by election or appointment.

Home rule legislation. In 1879 California became the second state in the union to permit municipal home rule. Missouri had given its larger cities limited home rule in 1875. "Assembly Constitutional Amendment No. 16 to Article 11" of the state constitution, enabled the creation of municipal governments exclusively by general laws set forth in the constitution and enacted by the state legislature. The state legislature was required to promulgate general laws for the creation, organization and classification of cities. The amendment enabled local voters in cities with 100,000 or more inhabitants to adopt home rule charters, based on state law. Once ratified, both houses of the state legislature had to approve a charter (provision deleted in 1969). Once approved the city became a charter city upon filing its charter with the secretary of state. Article 11 prohibited the legislature from passing special acts that interfered in local government and from placing tax burdens on property owners or allocating funds for support of local government. Home rule cities were intended to be self sustaining. Only San Francisco had sufficient population to petition the state legislature for a home rule charter. Los Angeles remained a charter city under the 1849 charter-special acts provisions until 1888.

In 1883 the state legislature enacted the Municipal Corporations Act. It classified cities into charter and general law cities. Cities were allowed to remain under charter-special acts provisions or to petition to reincorporate under general law or home rule (freeholder) charters. All but three cities (Hornitos, Gilroy, Alviso) chose to reincorporate. Subsequently the state supreme court ruled that any city law or charter provision that conflicted with state laws pertaining to municipal governance was null and void. In 1911 a constitutional amendment allowed either the city council by two-thirds vote to frame a charter or the electorate by petition of 15% of the registered voters (freeholders) to place candidates for a board of freeholders on the ballot. Once elected the 15 member board had 90 days to frame a charter (later changed to two years). A charter had to be ratified by a majority of the voters in the area seeking charter status. Article 11 and the Municipal Corporations Act (Government Code Division 2, Chapter 2, Sections 34450 et seq.) have been amended many times. Today voters in areas that meet charter city requirements may vote to incorporate as home rule charter cities, establishing any form of democratic government they chose, within the provisions of state law. Home rule cities adopt and enforce laws and regulations governing their affairs. Laws that conflict with existing state law may be deemed null and void, preempted by state law. General law cities must choose council-manager, council-administrator or mayor-council forms of government. They are allowed limited regulatory and police powers and are governed by the general laws of the state.

First home rule charter/populist amendments. In the 1880s Los Angeles was dominated by a powerful syndicate of landowners and businessmen led by Harrison Gray Otis (owner of The Los Angeles Times newspaper) and Southern Pacific Railroad interests, which controlled both the Republican and Democratic parties in the state. Locally Democrats dominated voter registration but the mostly Republican syndicate controlled the wards and, therefore, city government. The city was rapidly growing (from 11,183 inhabitants in 1880 to 50,093 in 1890). With increasing immigration, largely from the midwest, demands increased for reforms to give greater voice to the people (populism) and reduce the syndicate's power.

In May 1888 a coalition of progressives, socialists and utopians secured voter approval for election of a board of freeholders to draft a home rule charter. The charter was approved in October, enacting the city's first significant progressive reform: increased balance of power between the mayor and council, a civil service board, and a few civil service procedures. The charter reduced the number of elective offices to a mayor, nine city councilmen, an assessor, auditor, city attorney, city clerk, engineer, treasurer, tax and license collector, superintendent of streets, nine-man board of education and two police judges, all elected to two-year terms. A council candidate had to have lived in his ward for at least two years. The council had authority over legislation, appointments and other city affairs. The mayor was given limited supervision over city affairs, some appointing powers, a veto over ordinances (that could be overridden by two-thirds vote of the council) and other administrative duties, including providing one of the two signatures required for city contracts. A two-thirds council vote was required for all expenditure and debt actions. The mayor was designated president of the board of health and a member of the police, fire and parks commissions. Annual reports were required of officers and agencies and elections were set for the first Monday in December, beginning in 1890 and to be held every two years thereafter. In the December election, the mayor and most of the city council posts were won by Democrats, temporarily breaking the Republican syndicate's domination of the wards.

Courts subsequently deemed the library and street department provisions of the charter null and void because they conflicted with state laws. State law was amended in 1896 to allow charter cities to legislate on "municipal affairs." But the state supreme court ruled that the new language limited cities, requiring them to delineate in their charters specific municipal functions and authorities. Authority lacking in the charter was deemed authority of the state. This resulted in long, detailed, complex charters. The problem was not rectified until 1914.

In 1902, largely due to the efforts of Dr. John R. Haynes, a wealthy Los Angeles doctor and civic leader, the state enacted legislation allowing charter cities to adopt initiative, referendum and recall procedures. Haynes is credited with having devised the recall procedure in the form generally used in the United States to this day.

Initiative, referendum and recall procedures were added to the city charter in December 1902 (effective in 1903). Charter amendments also transferred more executive functions to the mayor, established a civil service department, imposed a tax to support an independent public library and created a three-member water board to oversee the water distribution system. The library and water provisions marked the start of Los Angeles municipalization reforms. Los Angeles was the first jurisdiction in the nation to adopt a recall procedure. To generate greater interest in local issues, a 1904 charter amendment changed the elections to off-election years so they would not coincide with the state and national elections.

City-county consolidation was considered in 1906. A city-county committee was formed to evaluate proposals ranging from total merger to enlargement of city boundaries for distribution of water from the Los Angeles city aqueduct. All ideas were rejected except annexation of a strip to connect the harbor to Los Angeles (approved by voters in 1906, effective 1909).

In 1909 Mayor Arthur C. Harper (1906-09) resigned to avoid recall. The scandal provided the impetus for passage of the 1909 charter amendments, including at-large elections of councilmen (wards were abolished), direct nominating primaries (eliminating party nominating conventions), nonpartisan ballots, shortening the ballot by providing fewer elective offices, creation of a public utilities commission and an art commission, municipalization of the harbor, electric light and power departments and enabling legislation for the establishment of a municipal railroad and municipal newspaper.

Four year terms for elective office were enacted by charter amendment in 1911 and the ward system was re-established, but nonpartisan elections were retained. The elective offices were: mayor, nine city councilmen from five wards, a city attorney, auditor, assessor and seven board of education members. The mayor retained veto power over legislation adopted by the council, which could be overridden by two-thirds

vote of the council. His new powers included a line item veto authority over monetary appropriations and tax rates; making appointment, without council confirmation, of the clerk to the mayor, chief fire engineer and chief of police; making appointment, with council confirmation, of all other city officers. He also was an ex-officio member of the police and fire commissions. Four of the council members and half the school board were to be elected in 1911 and the remainder in 1913, to prevent a sweep of the offices in one election year.

Daily council meetings (except weekends and holidays) were required by charter amendment in 1913, replacing the weekly meeting schedule observed since the Mexican era. In addition the council was given authority to issue instructions to any appointed city board, commission or officer, except those protected by civil service. Failure to obey could result in dismissal. Each councilman was assigned one of nine divisions of city government. Each was responsible for investigating and preparing legislation pertaining his division but did not have authority to administer the division. The council was prohibited from issuing leases of more than ten years for private operation of a utility. The municipal newspaper clause of the charter was deleted and the city was prohibited from using funds for publication of a newspaper.

Progressive (Populist) and Municipalization Eras

In the latter part of the 19th century the progressive movement swept the nation, led by the progressive wing of the Republican Party. Nationally it was spawned by governmental inefficiency, corruption and reaction to boss-style politics. Progressive Republicans like New Yorker Theodore Roosevelt (elected U.S. vice president 1900; president 1901-9) and Hiram Johnson (California governor 1911-17) were elected to office. California was a leader in progressive reform. There the progressives sought to break the hold of the Southern Pacific Railroad lobby on the state. Beginning in 1897, with enactment of the direct primary, reformers secured passage of a series of state constitutional amendments intended to limit the influence of Southern Pacific and political parties. In 1910, in addition to Johnson, a progressive Republican lieutenant governor and majority in both houses of the legislature were elected. In 1911 progressives secured passage of amendments that added four of the main tenets of progressive reform to the state constitution: initiative, referendum, recall and woman's suffrage. An amendment for nonpartisan state elections was defeated by voters in 1915. The national progressive movement reached its peak in 1912 when ex-President Roosevelt and Governor Johnson ran on the Progressive Party ('Bull Moose') ticket that was defeated by Woodrow Wilson but garnered more votes than the Republican ticket headed by President William Howard Taft.

Locally the reform movement was comprised of progressives and other populists, who advocated greater citizen voice in government and an end to syndicate politics, and utopians and socialists, who advocated municipalization of utilities, facilities and services. Both movements were reacting to monopolistic private sector practices and inequities resulting from self-interest based domination of political, governmental and economic systems by economically powerful individuals and groups. The reformers wanted to check undue power. The socialists and utopians wanted to shift power from the private to the public sector.

Recall, initiative, referendum. Voters to this day can place legislation (an initiative) on the municipal ballot, vote on measures already approved by the city council and mayor but considered objectionable (referendum) or remove (recall) elected officials. Measures are placed on a ballot by a petition signed by a percentage of the registered voters. The outcome is decided by a vote of the electorate either in special or regular election. Legislation enacted by initiative can be changed by initiative only. This prevents the council from nullifying the legislation. The recall procedure allowed the elected official's name to appear on the ballot. The charter was amended in 1941 after several precincts voted (1938) both for recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw and his election as the new mayor.

Woman suffrage. Los Angeles had an active group of female social reformers. In 1896 they organized the Los Angeles Woman Suffrage League to lobby men to vote for a state suffrage amendment. The amendment was defeated in November. In 1900 Caroline Severance reactivated the League which helped

develop a network of woman's suffrage activist groups throughout the state. In response to female activists who had helped win his election, Mayor Alexander (1909-11) appointed women to the planning, motion picture censorship and other city committees. In October 1911 voters approved a state constitutional amendment granting suffrage (the right to vote) to women. Severance, at age 91, became one of the first women in California to register to vote (1912). Estelle Lawton Lindsey became the first Los Angeles city councilwoman (1915-17).

Nonpartisan elections. With the elimination of the ward system and initiation of nonpartisan elections and the direct primary, the political party election system ended in Los Angeles. To this day candidates are prohibited from running as a candidate of any political party, ballot measures cannot be sponsored by political parties and government offices cannot be used to serve a political party. Reformers hoped the demise of political parties would result in issue-oriented campaigns and would open the political process to a broader field of candidates concerned about the public interest. Instead the reforms reinforced the dominance, in both Los Angeles and state politics, of the Southern Pacific and Los Angeles Times political power blocks. Their control was broken locally when Fletcher Bowron was elected mayor (1938-53). A variety of election reforms since the 1960s has reduced the potential for individuals or groups to dominate the political process for extended periods of time. The most recent was a 1996 (effective 1998) state ballot initiative that allows voters to vote in the primary election for candidates of any party ('blanket primary'), in effect turning the primary into a general election, further weakening the potential influence of political parties. As a result of the various reforms, local, state and even the partisan federal elections in Los Angeles and California tend to be free wheeling and unpredictable.

Civil service. In 1888 Los Angeles became the first city in the nation to establish civil service, creating by charter amendment a five-member civil service board and providing limited civil service procedures. In 1902 a charter amendment created a civil service department, the second in the nation (San Francisco in 1900 was the first). The 1925 charter established a paid managerial board and detailed certification, probation and promotion policies. Civil service dramatically professionalized government, eliminating the "ward healing" system in which jobs were doled out and terminated on the basis of political favoritism.

Staff in agencies that operate under the civil service system are selected for positions on the basis of specified qualifications and through competitive examination. Generally they cannot be fired or disciplined without cause and rights of appeal. Most of the city's approximately 44,000 employees are subject to and protected by civil service. Staffs not covered by the civil service system include: nonclerical staff in the offices of the mayor and city council, agency heads and certain top executive staff, the professional staffs of the city legislative analyst's office and ethics commission, the entire staff of the city attorney's office and staff of some federally funded programs.

Selection and promotion of employees under the civil service system is made by an agency from a list of qualifying candidates, usually after the candidates have taken a competitive examination and have been interviewed by a selection panel. General managers are selected, following professional qualification screening and competitive examination, by the mayor and confirmed by the city council and may be terminated for cause by the mayor. General managers and top ranking officials of proprietary agencies are selected and terminated by managerial commissions. Today the personnel department is responsible for management of the civil service system. The department is managed by a director. The civil service commission promulgates civil service rules and procedures and acts on appeals and other matters, in accordance with charter and municipal code provisions.

Municipalization. After the Civil War (1861-65) Los Angeles was faced with providing services to its rapidly growing population. Lacking a large treasury or source of income for purchasing land or building facilities and systems, the council authorized private companies to develop and/or operate the city's utilities. Fire, police, recreation and other services generally were housed in buildings and/or on sites belonging to private individuals or companies and sometimes were operated privately. By the 1890s irregular distribution of

water, periodic gas shortages, excessive electrical rates, absence of telephone interchange, uncomfortable trolley cars, exorbitant port tariffs and lack of a free library spurred demands for municipalization.

Municipalization of facilities and utilities in Los Angeles began in 1898 and continued until 1936, when the city purchased the last of the private electrical companies and agreed to cease efforts to purchase the gas company. By 1936 the city owned and operated the water and power systems, park and recreation sites, street and drainage systems and the harbor and airports. Private corporations owned and operated the telephone, commuter rail and bus systems. The municipalization movement had achieved its goals of public ownership or regulation of services and systems deemed essential for the orderly functioning of the city.

Second home rule charter. In June 1923 a board of freeholders was elected to draft a new charter. Voters overwhelmingly adopted the charter (126,058 to 19,287 votes) in May 1924. The state legislature approved it on January 22, 1925. Although it has been amended hundreds of times, the 1925 charter remains the basis of Los Angeles city government to this day. It provides for a progressive form of government, with checks and balances that divide governmental authority between the executive (mayor), legislative (city council) and administrative (departments and commissions) in order to prevent any branch of government from becoming dominant. In 1925 it limited elected officials to two two-year consecutive terms and established a commission managed department system with professional department heads. The 1925 ballot contained two council options. The charter provided for an 11-member council elected at-large. A separate measure proposed a 15-member council elected by district. Both were adopted. The state supreme court ruled that 15 districts applied.

A charter commission was appointed by Mayor Sam Yorty in 1966. Its recommendations were submitted to the council which redrafted the proposal and placed it on the ballot. It was defeated in 1970. The council revised the proposal. Voters defeated the second proposal in 1971. The complexity of the charter proposals and effective opposition campaigns of special interest groups, especially public employee and general manager coalitions, were primary reasons for voter rejection. Subsequently the council submitted individual measures to delete obsolete sections and update the charter.

New Populist Era and Privatization Movement

The beginning of the new populist era was marked both nationally and locally by California voter enactment of Proposition 13, the Jarvis-Gann tax initiative (1978). Proposition 13 was the first significant victory for the tax reform movement which was clamoring for reduction in taxes and less government regulation. Proposition 13 amended the state constitution to prohibit raising of property taxes until a property is sold. The effects of the measure and subsequent tax initiatives were not significantly felt by local government until an extended economic recession in the late 1980s slowed real estate activity and fueled demands for reform. Reformers called for return of government programs to the private sector (privatization), deregulation, less government, greater government accountability and restructuring of government. Federal deregulation of phone, airline and other industries began in the 1980s. In the city of Los Angeles the movement spawned ethics reform (1990), a reinstatement of term limits (1993), steps toward privatization (initiated by Mayor Richard Riordan in 1993) and formation of charter reform commissions (1997). The California electrical industry was undergoing deregulation in 1998.

Ethics reform and related protections. One of the most significant charter reforms enacted since passage of the 1925 charter was establishment of the ethics commission in 1990. At the same time the voters approved associated reforms, including use of public matching funds for campaign financing. Together these are the most comprehensive municipal ethics regulations in the nation. The reforms were among those recommended by the Cowan commission, a blue ribbon committee appointed by Mayor Tom Bradley to evaluate alleged irregularities in his own and other campaigns following the 1989 election and to recommend ways to reduce the impact of special interests and the amount of money required to conduct campaigns. The commission was headed by Geoffrey Cowan.

The ethics commission independently administers and enforces the city's laws relating to governmental ethics, campaign finance and lobbyist activities. It conducts investigations, has the power to initiate administrative enforcement, may refer cases to other law enforcement agencies and can file a civil lawsuit against an alleged violator. It introduces ethics reforms; offers training seminars to public officials and candidates concerning ethics regulations and procedures; and provides advice and issues opinions concerning compliance with the city's ethics laws. To ensure independence of its operation, the commission was made a quasi-managerial commission with power to appoint and dismiss the director of the commission's staff. The director is accountable to the commission but is authorized to appoint, dismiss and manage the staff and to administer the work of the commission.

To distance the commission from political influence, each of the five commissioners is appointed by a different elected official, instead of by the mayor only. The appointing authorities are the mayor, city council president, city council president pro-tem, city attorney and city controller. The initial legislation allowed the mayor to appoint two commissioners. A 1996 amendment reduced the mayor to one appointee and gave the council president pro-tem authority to appoint a commissioner.

There are a number of other checks and balances that are designed to protect the public, encourage fair and honest exercise of government and minimize improper and illegal activities. For example, the city attorney's office investigates charges of criminal activity on the part of employees, officials and agencies. The state fair political practices commission, state attorney general, county district attorney and other local, state and federal agencies with investigative, police and enforcement powers also have jurisdiction over ethical and/or criminal matters. Open and fair government is further encouraged by "freedom of access" laws. Pursuant to federal, state and local statutes, official records are required to be made available, on request, for public review, in accordance with procedures set forth in the statutes.

A DESCRIPTION OF LOS ANGELES CITY GOVERNMENT

Elective Offices

The city charter provides that the offices of mayor, city council, city attorney and controller be nonpartisan, fulltime, salaried elective offices. Each officer is elected at-large (by the electorate as a whole). Since 1915 the terms of office have been four-year terms. In 1953 term limits were abolished. After the 20-year tenure of Mayor Tom Bradley (1973-93), the longest serving mayor in the city's history, elected officials were limited by a 1993 charter amendment to two consecutive four-year terms.

Mayor. The city's first office of the mayor was established in 1850 by the state constitution, which provided that the mayor not be a member of the city council. Previously an elected *alcalde* (mayor) had functioned as council president and head of city government. The office has evolved since 1850 to its present form.

Executive authority over Los Angeles city government is vested in the mayor. When the mayor is out of the city or incapacitated, the council president serves as acting mayor. The mayor supervises the operation city departments, presents a proposed annual budget to the council, recommends adoption of legislation, appoints city officials (including most of the department commissioners, his own staff and most of the department managers) and receives and examines complaints against officers and employees of the city. In addition to the charter responsibilities, the mayor, as the head of the largest city in the region, serves as liaison of the United States to 83 foreign consulates that are located in the area. Only New York City has more consulates. In this liaison capacity, the mayor is the principal contact between the U.S. government and the consulate, particularly in the area of commerce and cultural affairs. By ordinance, the mayor is director of the city's emergency operations organization, which is comprised of the heads of all of the city departments and is activated in time of emergency, e.g., earthquake, civil unrest, fire, flood.

The mayor is titular head of the city and as such can exercise considerable leadership. Most recent mayors have chosen to be innovative and dynamic, including mediating between political factions for purposes of

accomplishing legislative action; appointing special committees to investigate and eliminate corruption and explore ways to revitalize the city or retain and attract business; serving as roving ambassadors to other states and foreign nations so as to entice trade to the city and region; working directly with business to guide city growth and development; initiating cooperative ventures between neighboring cities and other governmental entities so as to better utilize local resources and assure compatible planning and development; leveraging funds and rallying public opinion to influence policies of the school board and other governmental entities that serve Los Angeles; working with community groups to encourage local participation and leadership in social service and neighborhood revitalization programs; and representing city interests at the state and national levels in order to secure legislation and funding beneficial to Los Angeles and the region.

A mayor is the most effective when able to develop a cooperative relationship with the city council. When such a relationship is lacking, a mayor may be unable to secure confirmation of appointees, approval of budget requests or support for legislative and program recommendations. Threat of a veto provides a mayor with leverage to influence legislation. However, a veto can be overridden by a two-thirds majority vote of the city council (10 votes). Under some circumstances twelve votes are required.

One of the mayor's most important roles is submittal of the city budget to the city council. It is through the budget process that the mayor establishes program priorities. The council can modify the mayor's budget. However, the mayor can exercise a line-item veto over council budget actions. The line-item veto authority helps to curb special interest funding and encourages the mayor and council to work cooperatively on budgetary matters.

City council. The city's first council of government (*ayuntamiento*) was established by Spanish territorial law in 1788. It was a three member elected body consisting of an *alcalde* and two *regidores* (councilmen) who were delegated duties by the *alcalde* as deemed needed. The city council has evolved over time to its present form. City legislative authority is vested in the 15-member council. It is responsible for initiating and adopting municipal legislation, adopting a budget proposed by the mayor, approving mayoral appointments, determining the functions of the various city departments, approving grant requests and funding allocations, monitoring grant funded activities and enacting city policy, e.g., adopting the city's general plan. Each councilperson votes on 3,000 to 5,000 separate items a year.

Council members are elected from geographically defined councilmanic districts. Candidates for office must officially reside in the district in which they run for election. The council terms are staggered with approximately half the council seats open for election every two years. This prevents a sweep of all seats in one election. Elections for odd numbered councilmanic seats take place in the off-election year between the national presidential and the California gubernatorial elections. Elections for the even-numbered districts are held two years later. Redistricting occurs every decade, following release of the federal census. The boundaries of the districts are established by the council and must conform to federal (14th constitutional amendment "one-person-one-vote") and state requirements for fair representation.

Each district contains approximately 230,000 people, more people than live in most cities in the United States. Council people are the most important link between city government and the citizenry. They spend a great deal of time in their council districts listening to citizen concerns, meeting with business people and local groups, visiting project and other sites and getting a general sense of what is happening and needs to happen in the district and the city. Council members in effect, are mayors of their districts. Other council members and city officials tend to defer to a councilperson regarding matters relating to their district or consult with them before becoming involved in or taking and action directly effecting the district. Elected officials who represent the district at various levels of government typically work together to meet the needs of their constituents and to support legislation beneficial to the district, city and region.

A 1981 charter amendment allows the council to meet three days a week and to determine its own meeting schedule and location, providing it holds not less than three regular meetings per week in city hall. Since

1913 it had been required to meet five days a week at city hall, one of the last councils in the nation to do so. The change enabled more flexible committee schedules and for members to spend more time in their districts. Much of the work of the council is accomplished in the fifteen standing committees (including planning, public works and public safety). Each member serves as a chairperson of one committee and as a member of two other committees. The committees conduct hearings and investigate legislation or other actions delegated to them by the full council. The committees may hold their meetings anywhere in the city. The council president determines the committees, makes the committee and chairperson assignments and appoints members to special council committees, intergovernmental committees and to appointive positions, as required or requested. The mayor also appoints council members and others to governmental boards and committees.

City attorney. The first *síndico* (syndic) or legal advisor to the city was created by Spanish law in 1812. The *síndico* was an elected member of the council who was responsible for managing the city treasury, including city owned lands, and advising the council on legal matters. The state's 1850 incorporation law required election of a city attorney with duties similar to those exercised to this day. The 1925 charter created offices of city attorney and prosecutor. The two were merged into the city attorney functions in 1932.

The city attorney is the attorney and legal advisor for the city. The city attorney's office is the only office in which all staff, including clerical staff, are exempt from civil service. This is to protect the integrity of the office. Staff are appointed and dismissed by the city attorney. Upon request of any city official, the city attorney prepares legal opinions, prepares and approves as to form city contracts and ordinances, prosecutes and defends actions and claims for or against the city and performs other legal functions. At the request of the city council, the city attorney may prepare city legislation. All misdemeanor crimes arising from violations of the city charter, city ordinances or applicable state laws are prosecuted by the office of the city attorney.

Controller. Under 1850 incorporation law cities were required to elect controllers. The first Los Angeles controller was elected on April 1, 1850 with similar duties to those exercised by the controller to this day. The controller acts as the chief accounting officer of the city and audits all receipts and disbursements, including those for proprietary departments. It is the controller's signature that appears on all city checks.

Non-Elected Offices

With the exception of the chief legislative analyst, each of the following non-elected officials is appointed by the mayor, subject to confirmation by the city council. Funding for each agency is controlled by the mayor and city council.

City administrative officer. The city's first administrators were semi-military *comisionados* appointed by Spain to administer the pueblo. The first civilian administrator position was created in 1822 by Mexican law but lacked authority. The position was eliminated altogether in 1830 when administrative authority was transferred by Mexican law to the *alcalde*. In 1913 an efficiency commission was created to monitor budgetary matters. An executive department was created in 1935 to provide staff investigative and analysis assistance to the mayor. The efficiency commission became the bureau of budget and efficiency in 1925. The department became the city administrative office in 1951, incorporating the bureau. The bureau was abolished as a separate entity in 1973.

The city administrative officer (CAO) serves in a staff capacity to the mayor and city council, keeping them advised as to the condition, finances and future needs of the city and conducting special studies for them. The CAO assists the mayor in preparation of the annual budget, researches and recommends improved city management and conducts regular audits of management effectiveness of each city agency. The CAO's responsibilities do not apply to proprietary departments, except by special request of the city council and/or the mayor.

City clerk. The city's first secretary was appointed in 1822 by alcalde. In 1823 the council decided to pay the secretary; the city's first salaried employee to be paid from public funds. The city's first tax collector, a superintendent of ways and means, was hired in 1836 by the council. He assessed taxable property and collected taxes, fees and duties, as prescribed by the council. He was paid a percentage of the amount collected and was required to submit a quarterly accounting report. Since that time the office of city clerk has evolved to its present form and duties.

The city clerk is responsible for the custody and preservation of the city seal, ordinances, contracts, records, archives and other city documents; keeping records of city council proceedings; administering oaths to elected and appointed officials; summoning witnesses to hearings upon request by city officials; overseeing city elections; maintaining a complete record of the city's real estate holdings; and acting as the city tax collector (ex-officio).

Chief legislative analyst. The chief legislative analyst (CLA) position was created by ordinance in 1949. The CLA is appointed by and serves as staff to the city council, analyzing federal and state legislation, lobbying federal and state officials to enact legislation of benefit to the city and carrying out other research and tasks, including monitoring grants. The CLA's staff includes full-time lobbyists with offices in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento.

City treasurer. The city's first síndico was created in 1812 by Spanish law. It was a combined position of legal advisor and manager of the treasury, which included city owned lands. The síndico was an elected member of the council. The duties of treasurer have remained fairly constant to the present day. The treasurer is custodian of all money deposited in the city treasury, all securities bought by the city and all unsold city bonds and is the accountant for receipts and maintenance of city funds.

City Commissions

Citizen commissions have been utilized by the city at least since 1870 when a police commission was appointed to suspend and discharge police officers and control the police department, subject to the authority of the mayor and city council. The 1889 charter formalized commissions, providing for boards or commissions of parks, police and health. A three-member public utilities citizen advisory board was created in 1911 by charter to oversee the water and power systems. A 51-member planning commission was created in 1920. The citizen boards had limited authority and no consistent form or structure. Efforts to establish managerial and policy making commissions were defeated at the polls until 1920 when a charter amendment established citizen commissions to conduct specific city affairs. The 1925 charter created city departments, managed by citizen commissions. Subsequent amendments provided a range of commission authorities from managerial to advisory. Except for the planning commission, which was made a policy board in 1941, commissions remained managerial until 1965 when several departments were placed under professional managers. Since 1938 incoming mayors have requested resignation letters from commissioners so they can appoint commissioners who are amenable to their viewpoints.

Commissions are comprised of lay people, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. They are exempt from civil service. Most commissions have five members who are appointed to five-year, staggered terms that run from July 1st to June 30th (the fiscal year). A commissioner serves until replaced by a new appointee who is confirmed by the council. Replacement can occur at any time. All commissions established by the charter are required to meet at least twice a month, except as otherwise specified by the charter.

All commissions except the board of public works are part-time. The board of public works is the city's only full-time, salaried commission. Part-time commissioners receive a small remuneration for meeting attendance and payment for mileage and meals (if meetings are reconvened after a meal break). Some commissions have chosen to be served meals during the meeting so as to consolidate time. Alcoholic beverages cannot be served with the meals and cannot be included in the cost of a reimbursed meal.

The state Ralph Brown Act requires all commission meetings to be open to the public, to allow public comment on any agenda item and to invite public comment on issues that are not on the agenda. It prohibits a majority of a commission from meeting privately to discuss commission matters. Conflict of interest is regulated by the California Political Reform Act and the city's ethics statutes.

City Agencies

There are over forty separate city agencies and departments. Some are established by city charter, others by ordinance. All managers, whether an individual or a commission, are accountable to the mayor, who, by charter, has the "right at all times" to have department heads "in sympathy with his policies of administration." However, the council, as well as the mayor, may define the duties of a council-controlled agency. The department system began evolving in the late 1800s to address utility and service needs. There are six principal types of agencies: no commission, general manager managed, commission managed, proprietary, semi-proprietary and commission only. Some agencies are established by charter and others by ordinance. The former can be abolished, merged with another agency or modified only by vote of the electorate, the latter by council legislative action. Until 1936 all legislative and administrative laws were established by individual ordinance. Passage of hundreds of ordinances each year made it difficult to keep track of laws and led to conflicts between statutes. In 1936 the city's approximately 77,000 existing penal, administrative and public improvement ordinances were sorted, organized by subject matter, rewritten for clarity and brevity and codified for the first time as the Los Angeles Municipal Code. Ordinances found to have been appealed by implication by other ordinances, or declared invalid by courts or that were in conflict with or a duplication of state laws were repealed. The Municipal Code (Ordinance 77,000) regulates city affairs. The codification process became a model for other cities and for recodification of California state laws. In 1969 statutes defining the administrative processes of the city and responsibility of city agencies were recodified as the Los Angeles Administrative Code (Ordinance 138,300). The charter and codes guide the city's administrative and regulatory activities. To facilitate tracking of city actions, in 1941 Mayor Bowron directed that all city ordinances contain a council file number reference and directed commissions to establish case numbering systems.

No commission agencies. The agency is created by ordinance to provide services to other sectors of city government. It has no authority to make city policy. Its budget is controlled by the council and the agency is managed by a general manager who is appointed by and is responsible to the mayor. Agencies in this category include: general services (printing, building maintenance, vehicle, supplies, mail and other services) and the information technology agency (computer, telephone and other services).

Manager/council controlled agencies. The city council controls the budget and the agency is managed by a general manager who is appointed by and responsible to the mayor. The commissions act primarily in an advisory capacity to the manager. Agencies in this category include: building and safety, city planning, cultural affairs, environmental affairs and transportation.

Commission/council controlled agencies. The agency is managed by a commission and the city council controls the budget. Agencies in this category include: animal regulation, ethics, fire, personnel and police and public works. The board of public works manages seven separate bureaus, including the bureaus of engineering, street lighting, street maintenance and sanitation.

Proprietary agencies. A proprietary ("independent") agency is managed by a commission and funded by fees and other revenues over which the commission has control. These agencies are so independent that they may negotiate with other governments, including foreign governments, for the purchase or sale of properties, goods or services without the express consent of the council or mayor. Agencies in this category include: harbor, airports, pensions and water and power departments (DWP). Airports, pensions and DWP have annual revenues of over 100 million dollars and control budgets larger than most towns and cities in the U.S.

Semi-proprietary agencies. The agency is managed by a commission that has control over revenues generated by the agency or special revenues it acquires. However, due to insufficient funds to meet operational expenses of the agencies, supplemental funds are allocated from the city's general fund, which is controlled by the mayor and city council. Therefore, the mayor and city council have some policy and administrative authority over use of those funds and, therefore, over agency administration. Agencies in this category: the library and the recreation and parks departments.

Commission only agencies. The commission is not attached to any operational agency, although it may be authorized limited staffing. Agencies in this category include: employee pensions board (determines validity of charges of unfair practices, representation of bargaining units, etc.) and human relations commission.

Other. Several agencies are established in accordance with state enabling legislation and federal law. Others are funded by federal and/or state funds (e.g., block grants). Staff of some of these agencies and programs are exempt from the city's civil service system. The agencies are managed by either managerial commissions or by professional general managers and operate under state and/or federal regulations, as provided by the enabling legislation and/or the funding source, and in accordance with city regulations. Agencies in this category include: community development department, community redevelopment agency, housing authority and housing department.

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Acknowledgments. This paper was researched and prepared by Anne V. Howell of the Los Angeles Department of City Planning, on her own time as a volunteer project for the planning department, 1997-98. Special appreciation is acknowledged to City Archivist Jay Jones, City Clerk Records Management Officer Hynda Rudd and William D. Estrada for their assistance in providing and guiding me to archival, unpublished and other resources, and to historian William Mason for reviewing the pre-1850 portion of the manuscript.



C101697858